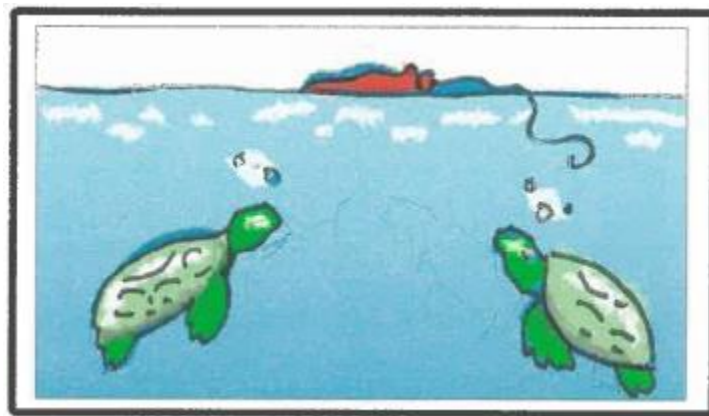


Final Report
FY 2019 Task 1.02
Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program –
Virginia Department of Environmental Quality

Virginia CZM Program Outreach & Social Marketing



Storyboard image for animated video on the impacts and alternatives to balloon release.

Report submitted by Virginia Witmer, Virginia CZM Program Outreach Coordinator



Virginia Coastal Zone
MANAGEMENT PROGRAM



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FY 2019 Task 1.02

Virginia Coastal Program Outreach and Social Marketing Final Report

October 2019 – December 31, 2021 (with extension)

The FY19 NOAA CZM grant enabled the Outreach Coordinator to engage with partners in the following activities, and produce or assist in producing the following products:

General Virginia CZM Program Outreach ---

Publications:

- *Virginia Coastal Zone Management Magazine:*
Produced, working with Virginia CZM staff, the Fall 2019/Winter 2020 issue of *Virginia Coastal Zone Management Magazine* (published in January 2020; contractual funds remaining in FY17 Task 1.02 used for printing) Copies mailed to state, local and regional officials, including all members of Virginia's General Assembly.
Downloadable from:
<https://www.deq.virginia.gov/coasts/publications-resources> Also viewable from:
https://issuu.com/vacoastalzonemanagementprogram/docs/fall_2019-winter_2020_virginia_coastal_zone_manage
- *Coastal Chapter for DEQ's 2020 (Water Quality Assessment) Integrated Report:*
Coordinated with CZM staff to provide updated content.
- *2021-2025 Coastal Needs Assessment and Strategies:*
Coordinated with Virginia CZM staff to format and post this report on the Program's website at <https://www.deq.virginia.gov/coasts/strategic-planning/coastal-needs-assessment-and-strategies>.



Virginia CZM Program website:

Continued as primary administrator of the program's website. The focus during this grant period was working with Virginia CZM staff to outline a plan to overhaul and improve navigation of website, including addition of new issue pages and content updates of existing pages to enhance conveying stories and results of CZM investments. This was done in conjunction with the DEQ website redesign process, which resulted in some revisions to the

Virginia CZM sitemap, and adjusting to a web content building and editing process. DEQ's website contractor did note that Virginia CZM's new navigation was very user-friendly.

Events/Exhibits/Presentations:

- *Richmond Library Exhibits:*
Collaborated with James River Association and City of Richmond on month-long displays at three Richmond Libraries in October 2019 to highlight actions citizens can take to protect water quality and increase native habitat.
- *Presentation to James River Master Naturalist Chapter:*
Presentation to Chapter on Community-Based Social Marketing and opportunities to engage in Plant RVA Natives campaign.
- *Plant NOVA Natives Annual Partners Meeting:*
Presented at January 2020 meeting to provide overview of to-date activities and results of Plant Virginia Natives Initiative.
- *Stormwater & Litter Workshop:*
Presented an overview of Community-Based Social Marketing and examples at this February 2020 workshop.
- *Central Virginia Nursery Association Symposium:*
Attended this symposium in Feb 2020 focused on native plant knowledge and use in all landscapes. One presenter stressed importance of behavior change and presented an opportunity to share Virginia CZM's efforts.
- *Virtual Virginia Tech Consumer Horticulture Resources' Partners webinar:*
Spoke on panel for a national discussion in September 2020 that included 100 participants representing 18 states and Guam.
- *Landscaping with Virginia Natives Webinar Series:*
Began collaborating with Plant RVA Natives campaign partners to plan a 2021 series of 12 public webinars on landscaping with natives to be shared through all regional campaigns.
- Scheduled to present and exhibit at a number of 2020 events, which were canceled or postponed due to COVID.

Social Marketing to Reduce Marine Debris ---

One of the near term actions identified in the Virginia Marine Debris Reduction Plan was design and implementation of a social marketing campaign targeting behaviors that will reduce balloon litter in the marine environment. Balloons were identified as one of the most harmful items to wildlife.

During the FY 19 Virginia CZM Program Outreach and Social Marketing grant, the Virginia CZM Outreach Coordinator served as a member of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean's

Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Work Group. The former Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body, and Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO), agreed that the best course for a regional marine debris strategy was to expand the [Joyful Send-off campaign](#). Balloons had been highlighted in an Assessment of Marine Debris in the Mid-Atlantic as a cause for concern. In addition, during a June 2017 workshop, Mid-Atlantic marine debris experts were asked to consider which common marine debris item A) posed the greatest risk to marine wildlife and habitats, B) was the most politically and economically feasible to address, and C) could be addressed using a single strategy across the whole Mid-Atlantic. These experts identified balloons as a priority target and agreed that Community Based Social Marketing was the best approach to help change behavior and prevent this harmful form of marine debris.

In December 2017, MARCO successfully applied for a FY18 NOAA Marine Debris Prevention Grant (\$145,607) to enable broad-scale implementation of the Joyful Send-off campaign in the other four mid-Atlantic states - Maryland, New York, New Jersey and Delaware.

In 2019 - 2020, MARCO's Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Work Group continued to receive Master Coaching from Doug McKenzie-Mohr to help guide the expansion of the campaign (funded by Virginia CZM through FY 17 Task 94.03). McKenzie-Mohr, suggested the Mid-Atlantic campaign focus on a broader public audience and use of CBSM social diffusion/normative tools. The Virginia CZM Outreach Coordinator had a leading role in preparing for and conducting these coaching calls, as well as working with OpinionWorks and collaborating with Mid-Atlantic campaign partners, to develop and conduct additional research needed to inform the CBSM campaign strategy to ensure that it will be effective in reducing balloon releases and debris in the Mid-Atlantic region. The Work Group plan is to implement a campaign that will be scalable beyond the target communities and transferable to other regions of the United States.

The FY19 NOAA CZM grant also enabled the Outreach Coordinator to work with partners to produce or assist in producing the following marine debris reduction products:

Balloon Litter Videos:



Balloon Litter: Say No to Letting It Go! – 2:08 minutes

(www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hw8-cagsM8M)

Revision of an animated video highlighting the impacts of balloon litter and alternatives to release, which was first released in 2018, to expand the number of alternatives highlighted.

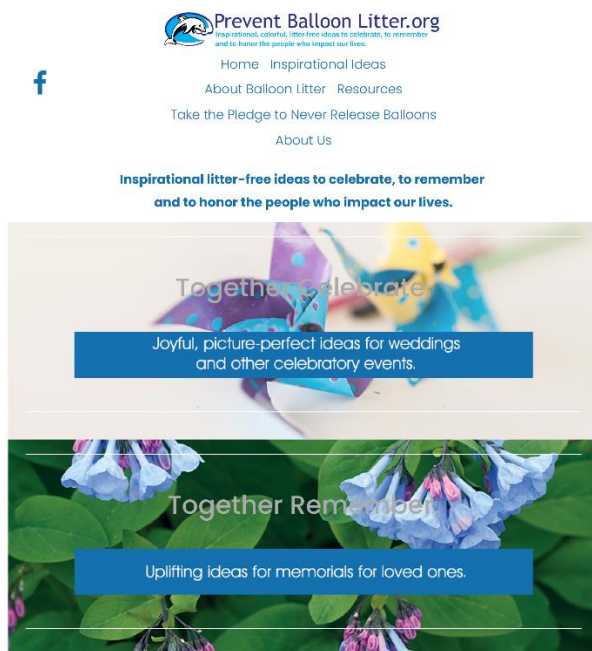
A 2:26 minute Spanish translation of the video - *Prevenir la basura de globos en español* – was also produced (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J6c8oBVT0fs>).

The coordinator drafted the script and reviewed the storyboard for each video, and selected the voice-over talent.

Both videos were produced in collaboration with Clean Virginia Waterways of Longwood University (with funding under FY Task).

The video was screened virtually at the 2020 Films on the Canal Walk in Richmond.

Prevent Balloon Litter Website:



Redesigned the Prevent Balloon Litter website – www.PreventBalloonLitter.org, in collaboration with Clean Virginia Waterways to outline new navigation and content. The site is framed on positive messaging of alternatives to releases. Imagery, messaging and language used on the site is informed by findings of research on balloon release in Virginia, design of the Joyful Send-off CBSM campaign pilot and additional research conducted in the Mid-Atlantic. The website is also a collection point for pledges from visitors not to participate in a balloon release. The website also highlights the impacts of balloon litter, and offers video, online and print

resources. Website sponsor partners are being recruited who share the mission and availability of the website. Partners include organizations throughout the US and in other countries. Simultaneously redesigned the JoyfulSendoff.org website. Served as primary administrator of both websites.

Social Marketing to Increase Native Plant Use ---

The Outreach Coordinator continued to co-chair and coordinate the activities of the Virginia Native Plants Marketing Partnership, working with members to implement an Action Plan, which describes the activities that partners are collectively taking, or can take, to leverage resources and the diversity of our partnership to advance the mission of the partnership (www.plantvirginiannatives.org/virginia-native-plant-marketing-partnership-action-plan/). The mission is “to identify and prioritize opportunities to collaborate on Virginia native plant communication and marketing efforts and form cohesive and coordinated messaging and strategies to increase local availability and use of native plants state-wide for their many ecological benefits.”

Below are highlights of this work, which raised visibility of Virginia CZM and the program's native plant marketing efforts:

- Continued serving as main administrator of the website – <http://www.PlantVirginiaNatives.org> – home for the Virginia Native Plants Marketing Partnership, a central hub for Virginia native plant information and host to a sub-site for regional campaigns - Plant Eastern Shore Natives, Plant Central Rapp Natives, Plant Southwest Virginia Natives, Plant Northern Piedmont Natives, Plant Southern Piedmont Natives and Plant Richmond Virginia (RVA) Natives. A native plant marketing issue page is still available on the Virginia CZM Program website, and highlights the leadership of Virginia CZM and links to the new website. This website had 39,000 visits (up 116% from the previous year) and 73,000 page views (up 105% from the previous year) during the grant period, from October 1, 2019 – September 30, 2020.
- Coordinated with the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to have Nursery Inspection Program inspectors reach out to all plant nurseries (2,000 on the list) about need for greater variety and quantity of native species. Inspectors will circulate availability of regional plant guides and encourage providers to participate in a statewide native plant inventory and demand survey the Virginia CZM Program will be revising and redistributing with its Plant Virginia Natives Initiative partners.

- Virginia Master Gardeners have focused on providing the regional guide through Virginia Tech's Smart Green Lawns program to encourage residents to replace some lawn with native plants.
- Staffed a new Virginia State Fair exhibit in September and October of 2019, including over a dozen new educational display panels, a new Plant Natives for Pollinators pledge decal and banner (over 535 signatures collected), and a native plant garden installed in partnership with Hanover Master Gardeners.

The Outreach Coordinator continued to work closely with the coordinators and steering teams of the current regional native plant campaigns as an advisor, and to provide assistance where needed and to encourage communication and sharing of resources between the campaigns. An overview of the regional marketing efforts is available at <https://www.plantvirginiannatives.org/virginia-regional-native-plant-campaigns/>.

- Designed new "Please Carry Cards" for use by all regional campaigns. The card includes an acknowledgement to the Virginia CZM Program.



- Reprinted the pledge decal – *Plant Natives for Pollinators* (25,000; cost split between funds remaining in FY18 Task 1.02 - \$2,132, and FY19 Task 1.02 - \$4,093) distributed by all the regional native plant campaigns.
- Continued to serve as the Plant RVA Natives campaign coordinator until another partner or partners take on this role.
- Compiled a digital Point-of-Sale notebook to aid campaigns in establishing provider partnerships. Personalized emails to the retailers



in the Richmond region resulted in immediate responses from some centers to say that they were very busy fulfilling on-line and curbside pick-up or deliveries – and natives were in demand – regardless of center closure to costumers due to Covid 19.

- Coordinated reprint of *Native Plants for Virginia's Capital Region*. Partners raised and contributed all funding needed - \$10,000 for 7,000 copies. The Virginia Native Plant Society served as the fiscal agent.
- Edited and coordinated reprint of *Native Plants for Central Rappahannock*. Partners raised and contributed \$8,016 for 5,000 copies, with the George Washington Regional Commission serving as fiscal agent.
- Provided guidance and materials to partners developing the Plant Southern Piedmont Natives and Plant Southwest Virginia Natives. An updated state-wide regional campaign boundary map can be viewed on PlantVirginiaNatives.org at <https://www.plantvirginiannatives.org/virginia-regional-native-plant-campaigns-guides>. Provided guidance to the Plant Southwest Virginia Natives campaign coordinator on grant applications to support the campaign. They were successful in securing a \$175,000 grant from the Virginia Outdoors Foundation toward production of their regional native plant guide, a community-supported native plant propagation center focusing on local provenance forest communities, and implementation of a community accessible native forest demonstration garden. This may pave the way for additional funding from grant providers and further leverage the Virginia CZM Program investment.
- Virginia CZM's investment in the Plant NOVA Natives campaign continued to reap results, with Northern Virginia Regional Commission staff sharing that all the hard work of promoting native plants really paid off with Fairfax County's adoption of a comprehensive plan amendment that requires public facilities to use "natural landscaping" i.e. native plants. The language includes several references to Plant NOVA Natives.
- Began collaborating with all regional campaign coordinators and key partners on planning for a 2021 12-part webinar series – Landscaping with Virginia Natives, in part due to Covid 19 restrictions and the inability of the regional campaigns to conduct in-person outreach. Funds remaining in FY20 Task 1.02 secured two speakers for the webinar series – authors Doug Tallamy and Kim Eierman.